

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 518.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1873.

PRICE 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.

TO MARRY AGAIN OR NOT.

No man ever had a fonder or better wife. I say so now, with as full conviction as I said it when I looked my last in her dear dead face, and kissed it and the fingers that had wrought so deftly and untiringly for the poor, for our children, and for me. I am a hale, active man of seventy, and, through God's mercy, capable of much enjoyment; but a day and night pass not without thoughts of how well she suited me, how simply she admired me, how tenderly she loved me, what a happy old couple we should have been.

'I wonder you never married again, Morton,' said my early friend, Jack Hathaway, to me once. 'You must have wanted a wife in the parish as well as at home, and you must feel very lonely in the long winter evenings.'

Then I knew that he was thinking lovingly of his fat little wife and commonplace children at home, and I was glad of it, for he is a good creature, and though we are intellectually antagonistic, and he sometimes offends my taste, I like him because we were lads together. I felt that I must say something, and I am sure I astonished myself more than I astonished him when I said: 'To tell you the truth, Jack, I did think of it once.'

I was so taken aback by the having made such a confidence—I had never breathed the fact—had intended never to breathe it—that I felt as I think I should feel if one of my good sound front teeth fell out, and I had to attack a piece of coal.

'Then what hindered you?'

'Well, to be candid—postage-stamps.'

'Postage-stamps?' he queried loudly.

'It is a curious story,' I answered. 'I will tell you all about it, if you really feel interested, but I would rather not have it repeated.'

'I am as deep as a well, and of course I'm interested.'

With that he crossed his legs, leaned back in his chair, and looked expectant.

I began: 'You know that I was left a widower with two children, a boy and a girl. They went

to school as soon as they were old enough. About sending a boy, there can be, in my opinion, no doubt; and I do not believe that a solitary girl can be educated, with advantage to herself, at home. She requires companionship, wishes for it, and ought to have it. I even took care to provide it for mine in her holidays. My wife had always taken great interest in the Daltons. Dalton was the perpetual curate of Furzeham, about four miles off, and he had married a favourite schoolfellow of hers. It was an imprudent match; neither of them had any money; of course they had a large family, and Furzeham was worth L.120 per annum. Mary helped them a great deal, and, "You'll be kind to the poor Daltons—won't you?" was among her latest expressions. Their oldest daughter was two years older than ours, and ten years wiser. Education, as it is usually understood, she had none: it was simply impossible: first, there was no money for it; next, her mother wanted her to help in nursing, sewing, cooking, housework. I must say the child was a strong case in favour of no education. She had abundance of talent; and her father being a gentleman, her mother a gentlewoman, she acquired easy, self-unconscious manners, talked with tact, read aloud charmingly, wrote a capital letter—she even danced and sang when she had opportunity. Now, partly for her sake, to give her the recreation she deserved, and a glimpse of better social things than existed at home, but much more for my own girl's sake, I always had Dorothy Dalton to spend her vacation with her, and I treated her in every respect as another daughter, even to kissing her and blessing her night and morning. It went on thus six or seven years, till Anna married, which she did at eighteen. Dorothy had been invaluable during the troublesome period of preparation for the wedding; and when it was over, I asked her mother to leave her with me for a time, not only to set new arrangements going, but to talk to me; for Charles, who was with me for the long vacation, was very dull, a mere bookworm. Mrs Dalton agreed; and for several weeks all went on delightfully. Dorothy had an exquisite gift of companionship—could set conversation going when it was

wanted, and her silence was never glum or oppressive. As far as I am concerned, this state of things might have lasted to the present day—I should never have dreamed of putting an end to it—but one morning I was alarmed by a visit from Mrs Dalton—I say alarmed, not only because her countenance betokened trouble, but because I knew that it was barely possible for her to leave her family. My first thought was of some pecuniary difficulty; not that she or Dalton had ever asked for even a small loan—yet how could they make both ends meet? Her first words were: “I want to speak to you alone.”

“So you shall,” I replied. “Now, my dear good friend, what’s the matter? Nothing serious, I hope?”

“No,” she said faintly, and with a quivering lip, not looking up at me; “but I want Dorothy to come home with me to-day.”

“Why?” I asked. “Is Dalton ill, or one of the children, or are you? What is it?”

“She broke into quiet tears; and knowing the woman’s long endurance, her strength as well as tenderness of character, I was very much affected.

“Come, come,” I said soothingly; “remember what an old friend I am. Try and fancy that I am Mary,” I whispered, and I took and kissed her roughened hand, spoiled for society, but in my eyes made venerable by holy household toil.

“She wiped her tears, and said: “We have all forgotten that Dorothy is now a woman. We ought not to have allowed her to stay with you after Anna went away. People are making ill-natured remarks.”

“Then I felt exceedingly angry, and said: “I really think that my age and social position entitle me to have a young lady staying in my house as long as she and her parents choose, even if she had not, as Dorothy has, grown up as one of my own family. How did you hear this gossip?”

“In the most innocent, unexpected manner, from my dear little Mattie. She went to Miss King’s to buy me some cotton. The Browns, who were in the shop, did not see her, and made observations, which she repeated, and asked me to explain.”

“I should have liked to know what the observations were, but I checked myself, and inquired: “Do you believe that this sort of thing is worth noticing? To me, it seems utterly contemptible.”

“No; it is not,” she answered firmly: “society has made rules, and they are useful, and we must abide by them. I will take Dorothy back, if you please; and I am sure you understand”—her voice faltered—“how much I like, and have always liked, her to be here. You are a second father to her.”

“You won’t tell her?”

“O no; there is no occasion. It is simply true that I am very much in want of her help at home.”

“Then I reproached myself for having been selfish in keeping her so long; and she came in, radiant and affectionate, and I felt that a sort of void was made in my life, which I knew not how to fill. I drove slowly back, after leaving them at Furzeham, and stopped to give an order at the saddler’s. While I was there, these words caught my ear: “Will she take the old one or the young one, think ye?”

“I could not see the speaker; I did not know the voice, but, at the moment, the words seemed to have an unpleasant significance, though probably they had no reference to me.”

“Things do occur very oddly,” interpolated Jack. “They might have alluded to something quite different. Circumstances seem sometimes to be tinged by what is uppermost in the mind. The man might have been talking of horses or cows that he had to sell. Had you any notion that your son admired Miss Dalton?”

“None whatever. He was at that time very backward socially—devoted to hard reading, and if he spoke of women at all, it was to depreciate them intellectually. I should have been hard on him for it, but that he could not remember his mother; and Anna, dear creature, is not clever.”

“She is none the worse for that, in my opinion,” interrupted Jack. “As a rule, clever women do not add to home happiness, which is the chief end for which they are sent into this world.”

It was useless to answer this, though it irritated me: he had always taken a low tone, or he could not have married the insipid little woman whose twaddle was quite up to his mark.

“But go on, James,” he continued; “I want to get at the postage-stamps. I think, by the way, that Mrs Dalton was right to take her daughter home. Unless people hereabouts are simpler or more good-natured than they are elsewhere, they would infallibly say that her parents were trying to catch you or your son for her.”

I winced again, and said: “You may be right; but as I have never troubled myself about gossip—possibly because I had never been affected by it—I thought it very hard at the time. There was I, deprived of the harmless, pleasant flitting of a girl about my quiet house; and she was removed from surroundings that suited her, to a very meagre home.”

“Where she must have been very much wanted by her mother,” interrupted Jack. “The fact is, James, that I suspect you were, quite unconsciously, in love with the young lady.”

“No!” replied I, stoutly; “of that I am quite certain; but I admit that after I had thought over the matter some weeks, I asked myself why I should not marry her, if her parents would give her to me willingly, and if she thought she could be happy with me. That, in a way, she loved me, I was as sure as that I loved her—not with a lover’s love—that was as impossible for me as second-sight, but with affectionate approbation, cordial admiration, genuine pleasure in her society. I could take her from poverty to affluence, and, when I died, leave her independent.”

“What prospect has a poor parson’s daughter? He can leave her nothing. If, by some painful process, he contrives to educate her—as it is called—to make a governess of her, what a life is before her! I declare I think a girl had better marry any kind, good man who loves her, than teach, teach, teach; conflict with the old Adam in children day after day, year after year; having no freedom of action, no home the while, till she is too old for it; and, after helping her family, has perhaps saved what gives her twenty or thirty pounds per annum, on which to languish and die. Dorothy, moreover, could only be fit for a very inferior situation; she had bright parts, but no systematic training. What was to become of her, her mother, and sisters, when Dalton died? She might—with her attractions, she probably would, come across more than one man who would be fond of her, but could not marry without money.

Of what use would that be? After discussing the matter with myself a month, I wrote her a letter, of which I remember every word—ay, even the position of the sentences. I told her that, though not with a young man's love, not with the sacred love I had given my wife, I loved her; that I would rejoice in her presence, would shield her as far as I could from the ills of life, till my death, and after it, would advance her brothers' and sisters' interests, make her mother's life easier. I told her to take her own time to consider, and to consult her parents. I wrote late one night, and next morning the letter seemed to me too important for my own post-bag. I was not afraid that the servants or post-office people would think it odd that I wrote to her, for I had often done that; but I resolved to take the letter myself, and post it at Crossford. The postmaster there had married a parishioner of mine: she would be glad to see me: the walk was a pleasant one, and I was in a frame of mind which demanded quick motion. I stepped out cheerily, that bright September morning, wondering, among other wonderings, whether Dorothy and I should ever walk that way as man and wife.

'Now,' interrupted Jack, 'I suppose we are coming to the postage-stamps.'

'We are,' said I, 'but we must come at them my own way. The post-office at Crossford was a grocer's shop. The mistress, my friend, Mrs Sims, was, as I expected, pleased with my visit.'

'Such a pleasure, to be sure, sir, and you looking so well—fresh as a four-year-old,' as my good-man do say of you, sir, special.—Yes, he's nicely, sir; thank you—gone to Boxham market to look about some pigs. There's a fine new sort, they do say, that Sir William have brought into the county, from Shropshire. You'll come into the parlour, sir, and sit down. You may well look at all them letters. I couldn't say how many has been for stamps this morning; and I hadn't one till half-an-hour ago. Master Charley, too, he have been for some. They left their letters, and I said I'd see to stamping them, and that I will, surely.'

'I'll do it for you,' said I. 'I see you want to put away these goods; and it will amuse me while I talk to you.'

'So, notwithstanding resistance on her part, I began. I daresay there were between thirty and forty of them, and I was getting rather tired when I came to the last. I had really not looked at the addresses of the others. I could not have told where one of them was going; but this one'—

'Was to Miss Dalton, from your son?' exclaimed Jack.

'It was indeed,' I replied; 'and I cannot attempt to describe my feelings. I believe that I was for some seconds unconscious; the ground seemed gone from under my feet. My own son was deceiving me; and I could not conjecture how far Dorothy was involved. The one miserable consolation was, that my own letter remained safe in my pocket. I was not committed. I conclude that my countenance had changed, for when I rose to go, as I did immediately, Mrs Sims entreated me to have some brandy, saying she was sure that "the smell of the nasty dips had upset me; but what could she do? People must live, and she must sell what there was a demand for."

'You need not be told with what different feelings I walked home; the entire aspect of life was

changed for me. Dorothy was irretrievably lost, and hanging over me was the disagreeable necessity for an explanation with Charles. As far as my observation reached, he had not only shewn no preference for Dorothy, but paid her less attention than, in my opinion, she had a right to expect from him. It annoyed me exceedingly to become aware that I was an utter stranger to my son's inner life; I thought him more than usually silent at dinner, but then I was constrained and heavy-hearted. As soon as the servant was gone, I said: "Pray, Charles, do you consider me an inquisitive man?"

"Certainly not," he replied. "No man less so, I should say."

"Have I ever," I demanded, "shewn any distrust of you, or any disposition to hamper you by unnecessary exercise of parental authority?"

'He looked amazed, and answered: "No, sir; I have always felt, when comparing my position with other men's, that I was singularly fortunate in my father."

"That's well. I have the less difficulty, then, in putting a question to you. What's the meaning of a letter addressed by you to Dorothy, which, without blame being due to anybody, I saw this morning at Crossford post-office?"

'Surprise, displeasure, and a sort of doggedness, were in the countenance; he turned away from me, and some seconds—they seemed to me minutes—passed before he said: "It would never have occurred to me that there was anything out of the way in my writing to her; we have been brought up like brother and sister."

"But why walk six miles to post your letter? I should not have thought anything about seeing a letter from you to Dorothy on the table or in the bag, though I should have reminded you that you could not correspond with her with propriety. You might, of course, have written a casual note to her about a book, or some arrangement."

"Why infer," he asked, "that the letter you have seen was not one of this character?"

"In the first place," I replied, "because you took the trouble to post it where it was in the highest degree improbable that I should see it; and lastly, from your evasions."

'Then there was a long pause, and I thought he was determined not to speak.

"Charles," I said sternly, "Dorothy has been so much among us, that I am responsible for whatever, involving her happiness or misery, is connected with any of us. As your father, and in place of her father, I demand what relation exists between you and her which leads to your writing to her clandestinely. If I cannot elicit it from you, I shall have an immediate explanation with her."

'He looked badgered, ill-tempered even, and said hurriedly and surlily: "I wrote to Dorothy to ask her to marry me some day."

"Asked her to marry you!" I exclaimed. "I put aside your gross disrespect in ignoring me in so important a matter, and remind you that you have not taken your degree, that you are wholly dependent on me, and that, during my lifetime, unless I assist you, you will, in all probability, have nothing better than a country curacy."

"I suppose it was not unnatural to expect that you would help me, sir, as you are very fond of Dora."

'This he said in a tone which softened me a little. After all, thought I, he is very young. "Pray,

what answer do you expect from her?" I inquired. I was relieved to find that she was innocent of aught that would have lowered her in my eyes. She was lost to me for ever, whether she accepted Charles or not, but she was worthy the place I had given her in my heart, and would have given her in my house. Without giving him time to reply, I went on: "I have too good an opinion of her to believe that she will answer you without consulting her mother."

"I begged her to say nothing to any one."

"Then either," I rejoined, "you are more ignorant of the world than I believed even a reading-man could be, or you have endeavoured consciously to lead her to act as a modest girl should not. Pray, what reason did you give for such a request?"

"This: that, in the event of her taking me, some years must elapse before I could marry; and I should dislike being pointed at as an engaged man all that time; and that if she refused me, it was no business of any one else."

"His cool selfishness exasperated me. I got up and walked about the room. "Good heavens!" I ejaculated; "and you are a very young man, and my son."

"Of course, I did not put it quite so broadly as that," he observed, rather apologetically; "but you expect confidence, and I am not a man of many words. I really took pains to write a proper letter, and I think I succeeded. I always had a notion that I should never marry. A college life has been my object since I was old enough to have one, and, as a rule, I find women a bore; but Dorothy is different from all the women I know—suits me, in fact. I thought I should like to make sure of her, and would not mind waiting for her. You see, it could all go on quietly enough. I should see her here a great deal."

"I set my son down as utterly abnormal, and I think I disliked him for a minute, but I remembered his poor mother's loving pride in him as a little child, and relented."

"Have you any reason for expecting that Dorothy will accept you?" I inquired.

"He leaned back comfortably, put his hands in his pockets, and said: "Not exactly; but I do not see why she should not; she is very fond of us all. At anyrate, I will let you know as soon as I get an answer."

"With that he seemed to consider the conference over, and that he was at liberty to leave the room, I was glad when he was gone. I puzzled myself very much as to how Dorothy would act—not as to whether she would accept Charles—it never occurred to me to discuss that with myself. Would she tell her mother? Undeniably, she would wish to do so, for she was openness itself; but she would be unwilling to annoy Charles, because he was my son, if for no other reason. Would she write to me? or would her father or mother write? Unless they sent a special messenger—and they guarded conscientiously against needless small expenses—there could be no letter till the third day. In the interval, there was no perceptible change in Charles's ways, except that he was constrained when we were alone. I imagined that he feared I should renew the subject, but I was not at all inclined to do that. I had discovered a great gulf, unsuspected before, between my first-born and myself. My life was placed in a new groove, and did not—perhaps never would—run easily in it, and that odious

gossip had given the first impetus. I believe my hands trembled a little when I unlocked the post-bag on that third morning. There was no letter for Charles, but a note from Mrs Dalton, asking me to call as soon as I could. I gave it to him without a remark. He put it in his pocket, and did not read it in the room. Soon after breakfast I walked to Furzeham. Dora came to me in the little study, and again I felt how changed I was. Up to that time, we had held out both hands mutually and simultaneously, and I had kissed her as heartily and naturally as if she had been Anna: now, my own secret consciousness made that impossible, and the something unexpressed by me, or something which I did not fathom in her, held her back.

"Colouring, and looking distressed, she gave me one hand, saying: "It was very good of you to come so soon, but I thought you would."

"I made an effort to be playful, and rejoined: "You know I have utterly spoiled you, kitten!"

"The smile this evoked was a poor pitiful spectre.

"Come," I went on; "I know why you sent for me, so you need not worry yourself about how to begin. Charles has told me."

"Oh! I am so glad. But why did he not do so before he wrote to me? It would have saved me great unhappiness. I did not know if I ought not to have kept his secret, though I should have felt quite guilty hiding anything, especially such a thing, from mamma; but I could not. The letter was taken to her, and, of course, she has always opened and read my letters as if they were her own."

"Quite right: the longer she does so the better. Charles had no right to make such a request. I am surprised that he did not know better."

"But I am sorry to have done anything disagreeable to any of you. I am so fond of Anna; and you have always, *always* been so kind to me."

"There is no harm whatever done, Dorothy: circumstances helped you out of a difficulty, as they often do help the innocent."

"Then we were both silent. I saw she wanted to go on, but did not know how; and, for myself, I had a sort of fear of what I should hear—but I helped her."

"Well, Pussy," I asked, "what are you going to say to Charles?"

"I do not know;" and she looked miserable.

"I have always thought you were very clear in your views, and distinct in stating them."

"Yes; I know my own mind quite well; but"—She stopped, and seemed about to cry. "I do not know what to do," she went on.

"Do you mean that you do not know whether you like Charles well enough to accept him or not?"

"O no; but there are so many difficulties." This was said hardly above her breath.

"Do you mean the long engagement, and so on?"

"She blushed with vexation, and answered: "O dear! no. But I am so afraid of hurting your feelings, or displeasing you. I do so wish it had never happened."

"But, my dear child, what could there be displeasing to me, or injurious to my feelings, in your being attached to my son? I think it would be an indirect compliment to me."

"She hardly let me finish, but spoke very earnestly.

"Did you ever think that I— No; you never can have supposed that; you must have been as much surprised as I was. If anything of that kind had been going on, I must have been the most deceitful creature possible; but I am afraid of your thinking that Charles would not have asked me, if I had not encouraged him. I am sure I should say so of any one in my circumstances. I hope the lesson will make me very charitable. I have really never thought about Charles at all. It no more entered my head that he thought about me in that way, than that you did."

"I winced. She had been speaking so fast that I could not get in a word. I was sitting in what they called humorously her father's easy-chair; she was opposite, on a low seat, leaning forward, with her little hands clasped in her lap, her pretty warm brunette complexion heightened, her eyes sparkling, her countenance expressing what she was trying to put in words."

"Dorothy," I said, "you will grieve me very much if you imagine for one moment that it would be possible for me to doubt your candour. I am sure you were as much surprised as I was. To tell you the truth, my dear little girl, I never gave Charles credit for so much good taste, and it had never even entered my head to think of his marrying at all."

"She looked, however, only partially relieved when she returned: "I am glad you understand me—I hope you always will."

"And is that all you have to say to me, Dora?"

"No; I want to know what I am to do?"

"That must depend entirely on your own feelings. I am quite as anxious for your happiness as for my own children's. Do you love Charley?" She only replied by tears; and I began to consider if she had a secret fondness for him, and thought I might object to her want of money, so I went on: "If you do, I consider him the luckiest fellow in the world, for, though he is my own boy, he is not worthy of you."

"I will tell you all," she said, wiping her eyes. "I do not love him; I am sure I never should love him well enough to marry him; but I do not like to say so to you; it seems so ungracious."

"In the depth of the meanness hidden in my heart, I was delighted that she had spoken thus of my own son, but I smothered the feeling, and walked to the window to look out."

"I am afraid you think me ungrateful," she resumed.

"That would be utterly unreasonable. No one can command his heart."

"You see that I do not think I could make Charles happy if I married him without loving him, and it could not be right either—could it?"

"Certainly not."

"I hope he will see it all as you do."

"If not, it cannot be helped. He has managed very badly. Young ladies are not usually gained by a *coup de main*. In my young days, men went thoughtfully and carefully to work, venturing on little graduated attentions, which had an infinite charm in themselves, and were skillful feelers. Whatever be Charles's disappointment, he has no one to blame but himself."

"I am so glad you think so"—this was said in her own natural manner—"and yet it is a great shame to say so. But you do understand—don't you?"

"Of course I did, and told her so. Then she asked if I would tell Charles for her."

"I compressed my lips, laid my head on one side, and tried to look as if I were considering. "What does mamma say?" I inquired.

"She thinks I ought to answer his letter. It is due to him, she says."

"I was of her mother's opinion. Of course, I did not see her letter, and we never recurred to the subject afterwards. Charles asked me no questions when I returned home, made no remark on Dorothy's decision, which, I knew, reached him next day, and bore his rejection with the apparent impassibility which had characterised his wooing. He took his fellowship, and settled into a conscientious, respectable, somewhat pompous don. I do not think he ever met Dorothy subsequently."

"It was a pity for the girl, and she was evidently a nice girl," observed Jack: "and her father and mother must have been disappointed."

"No doubt. When Dalton was dying, two years later, Dorothy was very heavy at his heart. "To think of that bright, pretty, high-spirited creature, chilled, drilled, kept under, as I have seen girls as sweet, lively, and good as she is, lacerates me," he said to me one day. And then I told him that, with God's help, she never should be; that I had taken forethought about what would be best; and that, if Mrs Dalton agreed, I would find the money for them to start a school for little boys, which I considered the least laborious undertaking for ladies, and she not only need not be separated from her daughters, but would be materially helped by them. His look of perfect satisfaction is among my dearest recollections."

"You're a good fellow," remarked Jack huskily.

"Not at all, Jack. I made no sacrifice, and insured myself very great happiness. They have always succeeded extremely well, and they spend their summer holidays with me; Anna, her husband, and children come at Christmas. As to the loneliness which you thought must oppress me, I know nothing about it. Of other men's hidden experience, I know nothing; but for myself, I find that, as I grow old, though I enjoy society with undiminished zest, I am more independent of it. No one is less dear to me, but all are less necessary."

ABOUT AMBER.

ORNAMENTAL objects, such as beads, made of amber, were at one time held in popular veneration throughout Europe, and till the present day such objects are in great request in Mohammedan countries. Two hundred years ago in Scotland, 'Lammer Beads,' as they were ordinarily called, were esteemed with a kind of superstitious reverence. The mystery as to the nature and origin of amber was enhanced by its electric properties, and we cannot wonder that this bright yellow and transparent substance inspired a certain degree of awe. We now know all about amber. It is a resinous gum, which, originally in a liquid state, has hardened to the appearance of a precious stone. Amber, however, belongs to a geological period anterior to what now exists, and is found on the shores of the Baltic, in Spain, Africa, and some other quarters. Occasionally pieces are washed up by storms on the eastern coast of England.

A remarkable thing about amber is, that many

pieces of it contain a variety of beautifully preserved insects, among which are many entire Diptera (common flies and gnats), Orthoptera (grasshoppers, crickets, and cockroaches), Hymenoptera (saw and turnip flies, bees, wasps, and ants), one Lepidoptera (butterfly), and several Coleoptera (beetles). Leaves and stems of plants, and a small shell, are also preserved. All such objects, animal and vegetable, were of course incorporated with the substance when it was in a liquid jelly state. The flies and other creatures had stuck, and could not get away.

When the amber is first found, it is in a very rough state, and can only be detected by a practised eye, and requires to be rubbed down and polished before the curious and beautiful fossils it contains can be seen. Although the communication between the Baltic and the German Ocean is broken by the land of Denmark, and only exists through the island of Zealand, and others which lie between Denmark and Sweden, it is quite possible, and by no means improbable, that currents may have conveyed pieces of amber from the coasts of the Baltic, through the Cattegat, into the North Sea, and thence they would occasionally, though rarely, be picked up on our eastern coasts. They may perhaps have been brought thence during the post-Tertiary period (a date comparatively modern in the geological history of the globe), when the now land of Denmark was depressed beneath the ocean, and hence the North Sea and the Baltic would form one uninterrupted expanse of water. There is no reason to suppose that any Tertiary deposit exactly equivalent to the amber-bearing earth about to be described exists at the bottom of the North Sea; otherwise, amber would be found in abundance on British shores washed by it. Amber has been found in the gravel-pits near London, derived probably from some of the Tertiary strata of our island; and pieces of resin occur in the clays of the Wealden in the Isle of Wight, and in the London Clay at Highgate. Perhaps one of the richest deposits of amber, and for which it has been long celebrated, is a province of Prussia called Samland, bounded on the west and north by the Baltic. In a portion of this district, fine sections are exposed of the Tertiary formation, varying from eighty to a hundred and twenty five feet in thickness. It consists of two different deposits, the lowest being composed of thick beds of glauconitic sand, sixty-five feet thick; overlaid by the brown coal formation, from sixty to a hundred feet thick. This glauconitic sand (which is marl containing a large admixture of greensand, and forms what is called firestone or glauconite) in the north and west coast differs from that in the south. In the former, the upper part, about sixty feet consists of light greensand, made up of large quartz grains and bright green granules of glauconite; elsewhere, the lower portion of this greensand is cemented by hydrated oxide of iron into a coarse sandstone, which contains numerous fossils. Below this is a deposit of finer quartz grains, more glauconite, and much clay and mica; and associated with this, a wet sandy stratum called quicksand, because it contains a large quantity of water eight feet thick; underneath which is a blue earth, or *amber-earth*, three or four feet thick, fine-grained and argillaceous (composed of clay). In this the amber is found abundantly, but irregularly distributed, occupying a narrow zone;

the pieces are of various sizes, usually small; those weighing half a pound being seldom found, and more rarely larger ones of greater weight. The surfaces are worn and rounded, and bear little resemblance to their original form, as the liquid resin of a tree, formed between the bark and the wood, or between the yearly rings of growth of the stem. Fine impressions of the parts of the plants which produced these amber nodules can be distinguished on their surface. Evidently, then, they were for a time subject to the action of water before they were imbedded in their clayey bed. Pieces of fossil wood are also associated with the amber. When any of the latter is attached to the wood itself, it is so completely penetrated by it, that it has the appearance of amber filaments. The amber-earth contains many fossil sea-shells, echinoderms, corals, &c.; and these shew that this Tertiary formation belongs to the oldest or Eocene period of geologists. The amber itself was evidently derivative, and washed down, probably, by floods from the land on which the amber-trees grew, into the sea, and there deposited with the marine remains which are now associated with it; although it seems probable that the land was not very far from the shore where it was abundant. Above and below the amber-earth, only a few pieces of amber occur. In the south, the amber-earth is thicker, and composed of two different layers. Professor Zaddach of Königsberg shews further that the trees which yielded the amber must have grown upon the previously formed beds of the greensand when the chalk was deposited, flourishing luxuriantly on the marshy coast which then surrounded the great continent of Northern Europe. Probably the temperature was then higher than it is now, and seems to have extended to the now frostbound Arctic regions; a fact which has been proved by the remarkable plant-remains (chiefly leaves) of temperate climates which have been lately discovered there.

The amber flora of the Baltic area under review contain northern forms associated with plants of more temperate zones, and with others even which live in much more southern ones; thus, camphor-trees occur with willows, birch, beech, and oaks, cone-bearing trees resembling the American *Thuja occidentalis*; a great variety of pines and firs, including the amber pine, which has been proved to be a true pine, allied to the *Pinus balsamea*, though it no longer exists. Thousands of these, the professor supposes, might already have perished, and while the wood decayed, the resin with which the stem and branches were loaded might have been accumulated in large quantities in bogs and lakes in the soil of the forest. If the coast at that time was gradually sinking, the sea would cover the land, in due course carry away the amber and masses of vegetation into the ocean, where it was deposited amidst the marine animals which inhabited it. But in higher districts, the amber pines would still flourish; and so amber still continued to be washed into the sea, and deposited in the later-formed (Tertiary) greensand, and still later overlying formation of the brown coal.

Amber has been discovered in Russia, in Italy, probably in Tertiary deposits of the same age; also in Africa, Brazil, and South America, probably derived from strata of this age. It has been met with in Sweden, on the coast of the

North Sea, and may yet be discovered in many other localities, when the stock is exhausted in the richer Baltic Provinces, and the demands of trade compel the dealers to search for it elsewhere. Vast quantities are washed up on the shore near Memel, also in the Baltic in the extreme north-east, and are thought to have been derived from certain Tertiary deposits containing amber in the extensive adjacent region of Russia and Poland, where brown coal containing amber has been discovered overlying chalk. Stores of this valuable gum still lie hidden in the interior of the country, and on the Baltic coast, though much is, no doubt, still buried under the sea, the amber-bearing stratum often lying too deep to be attainable.

Besides the plants which are occasionally found in amber, the most interesting and remarkable fossils are the insects, which, from their usually beautiful and perfect state of preservation, are more interesting to entomologists than the more imperfect remains of this class contained in many other and older formations, and are therefore more easily determined. As the plants of the older amber-earth in the glauconite series differ from that of the newer brown coal, it is possible that many of the insects would differ also; while those in African amber would present a greater diversity and a more tropical character. As a general rule, all the Tertiary fossil insects have a more decided European character, more like recent forms, than the carboniferous, liassic, and oolitic ones; and several are still found living now, though many are extinct—that is, are unknown at the present day. From the lucid clearness and beautiful transparency of amber, and its soft yellow colouring, the insects can be easily examined. It would seem that they must have been caught suddenly by the liquid resin as it oozed out of the pines, and thus were entombed alive, which will account for their wonderful state of preservation. Many of them, no doubt, were caught while on the trees; and even the cunning spider, while watching for his prey, was, like 'the biter bit,' enveloped also. Others may have been imbedded at the base of the trees, where the amberous exudation was unusually profuse. Amber also contains Myriapoda, creatures to which the common centipede, scolopendra, and julus belong, and which would abound amongst the decaying wood in the hollows of the trees in the ancient Tertiary forests of the period. When quickly enveloped, the insects and other organic remains are well preserved, retaining their natural colours and their more delicate parts. Those which died, and were long exposed to the air, are more or less injured, and are surrounded with a white mouldy covering, which obscures them, and discolours the amber. This is especially the case in some of the Prussian amber, but has not been noticed in the Pomeranian, which is always bright and clear. The families, genera, and species of insects found in amber are supposed for the most part to agree with existing forms, and even identity of species. Though many belong to our latitudes, others decidedly do not so, as, for example, some of the smaller flies and gnats, the cockroaches and other beetles, and the majority of the Hymenoptera (bees, &c.), which especially resemble exotic forms.

Many different species occur, as at the present day, but only those families are preserved in this fossil resin which are found in wood or on trees,

and scarcely ever water-beetles. As we should expect, many varieties of beetles have been discovered; also bees, ichneumons, and ants are particularly numerous. Moths and butterflies are rare, but have been met with, and several caterpillars. Flies and gnats are extremely abundant, so that the old adage of 'flies in amber' is well borne out by the investigations of science. There are also white ants, may-flies, ant-lions, cockroaches, grasshoppers, and locusts. Collections of insects in amber may be seen in the British Museum, the Oxford Museum, and at Berlin. Many of these belong to tropical and temperate climates, approaching more as a whole to South American and Indian forms, rather than those of Europe. While some are like existing species, others agree with no living species, both the insects and plants being extinct. Amongst other curious relics, lizards are stated to occur in Sicilian amber. A scorpion is known in Prussian amber, a genus properly a native of warm climates, certainly never occurring so far north as Danzig. There are also spiders, more like some found in the south or America. A few of the insects indicate a northern climate. Perhaps, like some of the Lias insects, these were brought down by streams from the higher and cooler regions of a mountainous country adjacent. At all events, we may conclude that the climate and temperature of Europe have undergone considerable change—which other animal and vegetable fossils of the same era prove—since the Tertiary period. The presence of tropical insects testifies that the amber-producing tree did not vegetate under such a climate as that which Prussia, especially the land watered by the Baltic, now enjoys.

As in many other articles of commerce, particularly where we have to deal with gems and precious stones, frequent deceptions have been practised upon the unwary, and even collectors of fossils have been taken in. There is a substance very like amber, gum-anémé, a modern secretion forming at the present day. It exudes from the stem of a North American tree, the *Rhus copalina*, so closely resembling amber, that only a practised eye could detect the difference; plants or insects imbedded in it would, of course, belong to living genera and species; and it is of little value when compared with the true amber. There are other kinds of resinous gum—namely, gum-copal, used in making varnish, and a gum which is derived from modern fir-trees, but all of recent vegetable origin. All may, however, be chemically distinguished from one another. Thus, anémé is very transparent, and copal differs from it by a faint opalescence and a pale greenish-yellow tinge. True amber, as we have pointed out, is derived, not from a living, but extinct coniferous tree, perhaps from two distinct trees, though probably a *Pinus*, like the living *Pinus balsamea*, and only existing in the earlier and later Tertiary formations. One certain test to distinguish it from modern gums is, that it does not soften when heated, as they do. To those who are not acquainted with the geological history of this earth long anterior to the creation of man, and the marvellous story which the 'testimony of the rocks' has told, it may seem very wonderful that an ancient resinous gum should yield so much of interest and value, not only to the scientific, but to the commercial world. Yet it is not more astonishing than the conversion of vegetable matter into coal, or the formation of masses of limestone rock of vast extent

and thickness by corals and little microscopic shells (powerful by their enormous abundance), and which are now making, as in times past, a thick deposit of calcareous ooze at the bottom of the Atlantic. The elaboration of gems, too, in nature's laboratory is an equally striking proof of the inorganic wonders which science has made known to us. No one, therefore, need feel surprised when he sees or reads of 'flies in amber,' or finds, which, if wise, he will do, 'sermons in stones, and good in everything.'

LADY LIVINGSTON'S LEGACY.

CHAPTER XXIV.—CONCERNING THE WILL.

THE reading of the will, in the case of a rich and childless testator, is in itself a subject so dramatic, that it is by no means surprising that more than one powerful pen, more than one deft and dexterous pencil, should have embalmed for pictorial or literary immortality a scene so worthy of the limner's or the narrator's art. In some cases, the wishes of a wealthy miser, of a petty tyrant at enmity with his children, or of a fanciful spinster, are so little known, that the ceremony partakes of the character of an actual Wheel of Fortune, of a lottery, wherein the great golden prize may fall to some humble Cinderella, to some clownish Cymon, as yet of no account in the world. There are instances in which the last will and testament tells no more than the so-called Queen's Speech, which is the formal prelude to a parliamentary session; where Amurath and Amurath succeeds, as the merest matter of course, and the only concern of anybody is, as to the pitiful little legacies that, like a comet's attenuated tail, are tagged to the foregone conclusion that the bulk belongs to the expectant heir.

The company of mourners gathered together in the great solemn dining-room of the Fountains was not at all such as a skilled playwright would have placed upon the stage. If there was Avarice present, it was not embodied in the form of a sour old bachelor kinsman, or a rat-eyed female cousin, wealthy already, and ravening in ghoul-like greed for legacies to swell the hoard. Luxury was not there, incarnate in the shape of a rakish young gallant, confident that his luck must change this time; nor were the rest of the seven deadly sins as prominently sponsored as they sometimes are. Even Sir Frederick Dashwood, who was there, with crape hatband and mourning attire, like the others, expected nothing, unless it were some trifle to buy a ring. There was one first favourite, and all the rest were dark horses, as he put the case, in the freedom of social life, to Major Raffington. It was a comfort that the old dame had not had time to frame a codicil barring Beatrice from taking him, Fred Dashwood, as her husband. He had not the least objection to leading an indolent life thenceforward, on the ample income of his future bride.

There were, in addition to the clergy of the parish, to the doctors, and to the lawyer, sundry others, more or less akin, for the most part, to the stock from which the dowager had sprung, or to that of her late lord. Oswald Charlton, among the latter, was present. He had been abroad when the news of his good aunt's death reached him, and he had lost no time in returning to England to

evince his respect for her memory. That was nothing. Those who never in life stirred a finger on our behalf will often flock like carrion crows to our obsequies. But of all assembled in that old banquet-room of the nabob's building, Oswald's heart was the heaviest. Save Beatrice, sitting with Violet Maybrook in her still darkened room upstairs, none beneath that roof sorrowed as did this, the old lord's nephew, for the kindly old kinswoman who had so suddenly been called away. Dashwood eyed him savagely, for he was not above the weakness, little as he cared for Beatrice, of resenting her presumed preference for another. But of Sir Frederick's hostile glances he took no heed, and indeed none of the by-standers appeared to be very eager to associate with the handsome, haggard-eyed spendthrift, whom the dowager was rumoured to have turned out of her house the day before she died, but whose conventional right to follow her to the grave, and to hear the announcement of her last wishes, none cared to dispute.

Mr Glegg, followed by his confidential clerk, the latter being laden with papers, came bustling into the room, and rubbing his hands together, took his place at the table. Every one expected him, in compliance with established usage, to make a brief remark or two, before opening the will, and then to unfold the potent document itself. But Mr Glegg appeared to be more nervously ill at ease than became a solicitor of his standing. He cleared his voice repeatedly, shuffled with his feet, rustled over the papers which his sedulous clerk placed before him, and finally said, half sheepishly: 'Gentlemen, I am afraid that I have not the power of performing what I had anticipated as part of my—yes, my regular duty on this—ahem! melancholy occasion. I see you are impatient, and naturally so, and I will not, therefore, detain you longer. I cannot read the will, since, up to this moment, there is no positive proof that any such will exists.'

There was a murmur of incredulous astonishment, swelled by the respectful, but distinct murmurs of the servants clustered near the door of the great ghostly room.

'No will!' cried the Hon. and Rev. Augustus Fleming, he who had read the service over the dowager's coffin, and who readily undertook to become spokesman for the rest. 'Why, the thing is impossible.' So said the looks of the spectators, as clearly as looks could speak.

'I am sorry, gentlemen,' said Mr Glegg, looking about him, 'to be compelled to repeat my previous assurance. I have searched, and so have the clerks everywhere at Bedford Row, but in vain. The most minute scrutiny here has led to no better result. I do not in the least mean to deny that a will was, very recently, executed by our deceased client, and I have no doubt in due legal form. Mr Goodeve, my partner, saw to the drawing of it, and superintended its signature—thus much his day-book proves. But there is no discoverable trace of the will itself.'

Then there was a babel of uplifted voices, where all seemed to speak at once, and none to listen. It was terminated by the butler's coming forward to the table to relate, with respectful firmness, all that he knew, that is to say, the approximate date of the arrival of Mr Goodeve and his clerk, their being closeted with Lady Livingston, and the presumed signature of what the household had never

hesitated to pronounce a will. This narrative bore with it the stamp of truth, yet Mr Glegg smiled faintly, as he shook his head.

'I am sure you are convinced of the accuracy of what you relate, my worthy friend,' he said magisterially; 'and yet the account, however morally convincing, merely serves to shew what loose ideas of evidence take possession of the popular mind. My partner, a clerk, and some papers, arrive here; a statement which is important, certainly, but which offers *per se* no tittle of proof that a will was signed and witnessed. Jumping at a conclusion is not a logical process, though laymen argue daily as if it were. Now, it unfortunately happens that Mr Goodeve, whose failing health and impaired powers as a business man had for months been a source of no light anxiety to me, did not make a formal entry of the particulars, but merely jotted down one or two disjointed memoranda, barely intelligible. From these I gather that a will was drawn up, and signed; and I conclude that it was of a short and simple character, and for this reason: no barrister, contrary to our custom, seems to have sketched it; and indeed the entire instrument was probably prepared by Mr Goodeve himself, from which circumstance I gather that its provisions were not elaborate, as they must have been had trusts and contingent remainders formed any part of it.'

'Well, but where is this will—long or short?' demanded Dashwood, almost fiercely. 'If it is not here, it must be at your office, Mr Glegg, and it is for you to produce it.'

'That is very easily said, Sir Frederick,' coolly returned the lawyer; 'but I cannot be responsible for the safe custody of a document which I have never seen. You may be sure, gentlemen, that I have not come here to-day to make the disagreeable communication which I have made, without having used every proper effort to discover the missing will. All Mr Goodeve's papers, whether at his private residence or in Bedford Row, have been examined with the utmost care; nay, every box of title-deeds and bundle of leases belonging to our other clients have been ransacked and tested, in the vain hope that my partner may have inadvertently placed this important paper in some one of them. Here, at the Fountains, the same care has been displayed, and again without result.'

There was a fresh chorus of exclamations, more or less suggestive.

'It is considered more regular, is it not,' said the Hon. and Rev. Augustus, 'that a will should be kept at the offices of the solicitor who drew it? I have always understood this to be the case.'

'There is no binding rule where wills are concerned—as to their keeping, I mean,' replied Mr Glegg; 'though, no doubt, they are more secure when in professional and disinterested custody. But etiquette does not, as in the case of marriage settlements, dictate their being consigned to the care of a third party. My own impression has always been that Mr Goodeve left the signed will in Lady Livingston's hands, but I admit that this is not based on any testimony.'

'But you have searched here, and carefully too?' said another member of the family, a distant kinsman, who had nothing to lose or gain by the result of the quest, be it as it might.

'I have done so, with the assistance of my clerk,' said Mr Glegg emphatically, 'placing seals on

every receptacle that contained papers, which seals remain—as I have this day satisfied myself—intact, and which, I may mention, also secure some valuable jewels and other portable property. I found everything, apparently, in good order. I have investigated every scrap of writing that belonged to the testatrix, and I can make affidavit that the will, unless concealed in some hiding-place so unlikely as to elude conjecture, is not under this roof. It is not at Mr Goodeve's house. It is not in our offices in Bedford Row. My partner is not, as you are perhaps aware, in a condition to give coherent answers on any'—

'But the clerk,' said Dashwood, striking his hand upon the table, and lifting his voice, 'the fellow he brought down here with him! why on earth don't you get the truth out of him? He must know all about it.'

'Your tone and manner are offensive, Sir Frederick Dashwood,' answered Mr Glegg, reddening; 'and if you had had the patience to wait till the conclusion of my few remarks, you would have been spared the trouble of putting the question which you have asked. That the clerk in question witnessed the old lady's signature, I believe. I believe, too, that he can be identified. The butler has spoken of him as a dark young man of somewhat short stature. We had such a clerk, until two or three days since, in our employment, and he was often in attendance on Mr Goodeve. His name was Daniel Davis, and he lived in Great Eldon Street. He has disappeared, both from Bedford Row and from his lodgings. There can be no moral doubt but that he has absconded.'

'Then he has taken the will with him; that's plain!' cried half-a-dozen voices at once.

'Pardon me,' said the solicitor, with an incredulous movement of the shoulders; 'I very much doubt that, and for the simple reason, that I do not believe he could have got it into his possession. Documents of that importance are kept by us in fireproof boxes, with Bramah or letter locks to fasten them, nor do any of these appear to have been tampered with. And we can account for the flight of this Davis without any such far-fetched supposition. He had been trusted by Mr Goodeve, —then in declining health—to pay away and to receive moneys to a very injudicious extent, and there are proofs that he has scandalously abused my partner's over-confidence. It is probable that the apprehension, that since Mr Goodeve's late accident, his papers and accounts would pass under other eyes, has been his real motive for taking himself off. I do not think we need suppose him to have burdened himself with booty so useless to him as this will would be.'

There was a pause. Every one stared blankly in the face of his neighbour. The lawyer, after a moment's breathing-time, went on: 'If Davis could be found, and if he could be induced to speak, no doubt he could establish the facts as to where the will was bestowed after its signature. As yet, the police have no clue to his retreat, nor are we at present in a position to apply formally for a warrant, if they had.'

'I think,' said Oswald Charlton, breaking silence for the first time, 'that two things, and two only, may be considered to be proved. A will was very recently executed, and we cannot reasonably doubt that it was in Miss Fleming's favour. That is one point. The other is, that

this will has disappeared in a very singular manner, when we couple its disappearance with the street-attack on Mr Goodeve, and the absconding of the clerk. Mr Glegg will excuse me if I suggest that the presumption is against the hypothesis of this document's having been left at the Fountains, and that very grave suspicions rest upon this person Davis, or whatever his name may be, however slight may appear to have been the motive for purloining the will.

Then again did everybody speak at once. There was scarcely one present who was not able to aver that the dowager had made no secret of her intention to leave her property to Beatrice. The old servants could speak to hints innumerable on this subject. The steward of the Heavitree estate, who had travelled to Richmond to attend the funeral, loudly declared that he 'had it in black and white, under her ladyship's own hand, that Miss Beatrice was to come after her' in the enjoyment of that compact estate. Doctors, friends, and kinsfolk were all in the same tale as regarded the testamentary intentions of the old peeress. But still the prudent Glegg demurred.

'Pray, don't misunderstand me,' he said; 'I quite agree with you up to a certain point; but as, unluckily, we are not able by acclamation to put Miss Fleming in the position of residuary legatee, we are obliged to take, as the law does, a cold and practical view of the affair. There was a will, and we all believe that we know its general purport, but it has not yet been proved to be still in existence. Mr Charlton has seen enough of litigation to enable him to bear me out when I say that the caprice, the fickleness, and the dilatoriness of testators keep the hands of those who administer justice pretty full. Unless we can find this will, it must be concluded that Lady Livingston herself destroyed it, probably with the design of making another of a somewhat different nature, and that death surprised her before she could carry out her scheme.'

'And in that case?' gasped Dashwood, on whose forehead a dark frown had gathered.

'In that case, legally speaking,' returned the solicitor, 'our client has died intestate, and everything goes to the personal representative and heir-at-law.'

'And that is John Fleming!' exclaimed the Hon. and Rev. Augustus, in dismay, and his remark was echoed by several voices in such a tone as to indicate that the said John would not be by any means a popular selection for the vacancy. After this, there was an end of any coherence in the assembly, which broke up into knots, sipping wine moodily, and enunciating opinions of more or less pungency on the event of the day, and so by degrees dispersed. The servants were almost in a state of mutiny against that impassive abstraction called the Law, and which, to members of the class from which they sprang, assumed the character of a distinct antithesis of Justice. That 'Miss Beatrice' should lose the fair inheritance which had been so notoriously designed to be hers, was in itself sufficiently monstrous; but it was an aggravating circumstance that this should redound to the benefit of John Fleming, 'which my lady always hated, the covetous, creeping creature!' said indignant Mrs Hart the housekeeper; 'and to think that he should come to be master here is enough to make her turn in her grave, poor dear!'

But Dashwood's anger was fiercer and more unreasonable than that of any there. 'It's a rascally plot!' he said aloud, after tossing off glass after glass of sherry; 'and if you think, Mr Glegg, that the matter is to end here, you never were more mistaken in your life, that's all!' But though he had insulted the attorney, and had passed scowling through the company gathered in that banqueting-room, cheerless enough now, he had Black Care to sit behind him on his road back to London, and fury, remorse, despair, gnawing like vultures at his heart. To have thrown the dice once again, and lost! It was almost more than he could bear. What mattered it though Beatrice were faithful to her word, when this fatal disappearance of the will made her no longer a prize worth the winning!

CHAPTER XXV.—A CHAPTER OF POLICE.

Mr Glegg's announcement to the assembled mourners at the Fountains had been, as regarded the continued illness of his partner and the disappearance of Daniel Davis, substantially true. Samuel Goodeve lay helpless and useless in his bed at Kensington, while the dark young clerk had ceased to occupy his accustomed seat in the office, and Bedford Row knew him no more. That he had abused the confidence of his feeble employer, seemed tolerably certain; but then Mr Goodeve's memoranda had been left in so dislocated a condition, and his attention to business had of late been so lax and irregular, that it was hard to say where carelessness ended, and where fraud began. The most damaging circumstance that could be adduced against the clerk was his absence. Had he presented himself as usual at his desk, and met Mr Glegg's investigations in a spirit of apparent candour, that gentleman could not easily have done more than dismiss him from his situation. Even as it was, the detectives with whom Mr Glegg took counsel quite coincided with the irate solicitor as to the necessity for caution.

'We must give him plenty of line, sir,' said Sergeant Flint, who was reputed at Scotland Yard to see somewhat farther into the metaphorical millstone than most of the Force. 'An action for false imprisonment wouldn't suit your book, Mr Glegg, would it, now? We may think that some of those signatures—the endorsements, I mean—are forgeries, but how are we to prove it to the satisfaction of a jury? Mr Goodeve can't step into the box to swear to his own pothooks and hangers, and between you and me, a verdict can't be looked for on the evidence of experts. Bless you! if one of these professional *pensters* comes forward to testify to the up-stroke of a *t*, another of the lot is ready to stake his fifty years' experience that it is the down-stroke of a *g*. They are like the mad doctors, and have got themselves a bad name by being too clever by half. I'm afraid there is but one chance. If we could mix him up with that garrote business, then we could put salt on the bird's tail, and no mistake.'

But Mr Glegg was lukewarm respecting the assault which had been committed on his senior partner, and by no means shared the eagerness of Sergeant Flint, the cause of which he was quite able to comprehend. The newspapers had been very severe in their strictures on the police for not having prevented, or promptly

avenged, the audacious attack of which Mr Goodeve had been the victim. The police are pretty well used to sharp criticism whenever an evil-doer eludes detection, but this had been a very glaring offence, and the *Daily Lime-light* had come to the front with more than one so-called slashing article, calling on ancient Rome or modern India to lend Londoners a vigorous administrator for a day, and demanding wherefore British Thugs were permitted to ply their calling in the Brompton Road. There was wrath beneath braided surtouts, and anger among those who had stripes on their sleeves, and ponderous boots encasing their protective feet. Our blue-coated guardians, Argus-eyed and Briarean-handed as we expect them to be, are after all, but mortal men. It is highly creditable to their sagacity that some suspicion should have fallen on the Ugly One, but then the person concerned shared that honour with a good many others 'known to the police.' There was nothing to connect Crane's accomplice with the actual assailant of Mr Goodeve. There were other members of the body-politic as ruffianly as he. But there was an ardent desire in Scotland Yard to serve up some sacrifice at the altar of Justice, and hence the inclination to connect Daniel Davis with the attack on the eminent family solicitor.

Mr Glegg's view of the affair was of a commonplace, commonplace sort. His partner was a moony, maundering old fool, who had somehow mooned and maundered himself into the clutches of one of those gangs of prowling miscreants ever on the watch for the unwary. No particular trap had been laid for Mr Goodeve—merely some snare adapted for the confusion of a rich and silly wayfarer. Davis was simply a rogue, who had taken advantage of the credulity of his weak employer, but who had made off so soon as he perceived that a more vigorous and vigilant administration of the business of the firm would jeopardise his security. To have punished the fellow, would have been well, and a good example to other hirelings; but it was absurd to mix him up with the garrotting adventure, or to countenance the monomania of the police for seeing in the most unlikely people the perpetrators of every undetected crime.

Detectives have this much in common with the demons which mediæval sorcerers were wont to invoke by unholy incantations, that it is easier to summon than to lay them to rest. The Sergeant and his brethren were by no means satisfied to gauge their views of duty by Mr Glegg's standard, and accordingly they persisted in prying into all imaginable nooks and corners, conversing with the most incongruous persons, and beating any and every covert where they conceived the game to lie, as yet without any very notable result. Sir Frederick Dashwood presently became conscious that his movements were liable to an amount of observation that was anything but flattering or agreeable. When he descended the club-steps, he could not help remarking to himself that the fellow lounging and chewing the stalk of a flower beside the stately portico of the opposition club, two doors off, had been lounging and chewing there with equal placidity two hours ago. The same faces were very often to be met with as he walked the streets. Near his house in Jekyl Street, there seemed to be always some slinking figure at the corner of the approach to the Mews. By gaslight or by daylight, eyes appeared to be

continually taking note of his actions. And, before long, a card was brought in to him as he sat smoking his cigar in the old consulting-room, where Sir George would as soon have indulged in opium or bang as in that tobacco the use of which, in his young days, was voted vulgar and degrading, save in the form of snuff. The card was thus inscribed—'MR SOL. STARKEY, *Supt.*'

'Who is the fellow, and what does he want with me?' demanded the baronet loftily; but in truth he guessed readily enough the calling of his visitor.

'I do think, Sir Frederick, he comes from the police,' said the butler, dropping his voice, and turning up the whites of his expressive eyes; for the police, and those who seek them, or are sought by them, are objects of suspicion and mysterious horror in every civilised land.

'Dash his impudence! what can he want with me?—Shew the man in, will you, gaby! I'll make short work of him,' was Dashwood's rejoinder; but in spite of the swaggering air that he assumed, he felt by no means at his ease as Superintendent Starkey came clanking into the room, made his stiff semi-military bow, and took the chair to which Dashwood pointed.

'And what, pray, may be your business with me Mr—Mr'—began the baronet, glancing at the card that he held between his thumb and finger.

The visitor merely made another wooden bow, and chuckled behind his stock. He was in person a tall man, much taller than Dashwood, and had a high head, sloping upwards to a point, shaggy eyebrows, a long upper-lip, and restless eyes of a gray colour. His blue surtout was accurately fitted and well brushed, and indeed from head to heel he was the perfection of neatness.

'You know, Sir Frederick. Don't tell me! A man of the world like you!' he said, as if in explanation of the chuckle.

'I can make a good guess at your profession, my worthy friend, if that is what you mean,' he said; 'but what you can possibly have to say to me, is more than I can conjecture. I haven't lost a pet terrier, nor has any area-sneak stolen my spoons, so I have yet to learn to what I'm indebted for your visit.'

'If it had been as you say, Sir Frederick Dashwood, baronet,' returned the visitor, 'you would have had a look-up very likely, but on the part of quite another class of officer. My time is considered too valuable to be squandered on spoons, let alone dawgs.' But still he did not seem in any hurry to elucidate the object of his coming, but sat chuckling, and with the forefinger of one glove rubbing the crown of his hard and heavy hat, with his mobile eyes now resting on Sir Frederick's watch-guard, now lifted to his face. Habit is, as we know, a second nature; and the police of all countries come to imbibe a certain orientalism of deportment, as adapted to their imperative mandate. They like to talk in parables, to speak by winks and nods, to do anything rather than say in plain language who they are and what they seek. A French gendarme, in reality as simple-minded a giant as ever wore jack-boots, yet practises a mysterious frown and sidelong leer that indicate a subtle knowledge of something to the discredit of every stranger he meets. F 93, young man from the country though he be, assumes oracular airs as he stands on the door-mat, lantern in hand, and would prefer to communicate with Paterfamilias

himself on the subject of front doors left ajar by night. The stars of the profession outdo this tacit assumption of importance, and Superintendent Starkey, who was an orb of the first brilliancy, prided himself on his diplomatic skill, and usually appeared as if to have been Capidji Bashi to the Sultan, and gone about with bowstrings and death firmans in his pocket, would have been his true vocation.

'You'll save your time, if it's worth what you say, by not wasting any more of mine, Mr What's-your-name,' said Dashwood roughly.

'Solomon Starkey, your most obedient,' Sir Frederick, said the detective, who was not easily offended. 'I must ask you, though, Sir F., to shew a little indulgence, just a little, for the difficulties we meet with. You see, Sir F., whatever happens, we are blamed—we are. I do believe some people, especially in the daily press, take us for a kind of nuss-maids, that ought to prevent the public from coming to any sort of grief—they do. And yet, if elderly gentlemen will go and get throttled and robbed, and documents get lost, nobody guesses how, and queer folks come over—from Canada, or where not—to play their little games— You know something of Canada, if no liberty in asking, Sir F.' he added more abruptly, for he had noted that Dashwood winced slightly, but perceptibly, at mention of the Dominion, and he was quick to score a point against a possible adversary.

'I was quartered there with my regiment, as I daresay you have heard,' replied Dashwood, with a yawn; 'and what you are talking of, unless it be about the assault on that old lawyer, Mr Goodeve, is Greek to me.'

'But that was an odd business, wasn't it, sir?' put in the detective. 'An orderly, methodical gentleman like Mr Goodeve, a Londoner born and bred, to be trapped as if he were a yokel out of Somersetshire, that happened to make friends with some generous-hearted chap, who stood glasses of ale and shewed a fistful of sovereigns to all he met. What made him go out of his regular road, I wonder? It does look "put up," don't it? You knew that young man, Davis, or Larpent, very well, out in America, I believe, Sir F.?' And again the concluding words were rapidly uttered.

'Knew him well! Not I, by Jove! mere casual acquaintance,' returned Dashwood; 'and then his colour deepened as he regretted the unguarded admission. 'What have I to do with this matter? I suppose you do not suspect me of garroting the old attorney, do you?'

Superintendent Starkey was immensely tickled by this idea. 'No, no, Sir Frederick,' he answered; 'that job was too neat for any but professionals, though there may have been an amateur in it, along with the regulars, too. But it was uncommonly kind of you, knowing so little of this clerk of Mr Goodeve's, to take the trouble to hand over such a lump of money to his sister—wasn't it, Sir F.?'

'I'll tell you what it is, Mr Starkey, or whatever your name may be,' said Dashwood, rising wrathfully to his feet, 'I'll not submit to espionage and impertinence of this sort. If I am to be badgered and cross-examined, let it be done in a court, and by a lawyer. I am not accustomed to be persecuted by the police, and, except under legal compulsion, will not endure it.' And so saying, he rang the bell violently.

'No compulsion, no compulsion at all, Sir

Frederick Dashwood, baronet,' said the detective, very mildly; 'we only hoped you would be willing to do what you could to further the ends of justice—that is all. Good-morning, Sir F.' And he followed the butler out of the room, and left the house without more words.

Yet Solomon Starkey, superintendent, and, in his own branch, a man of much renown, was satisfied with the result of his well-spent half-hour. To be dismissed as an intruder, is, to a veteran protector of the public, merely a trivial instance of the general ingratitude. He knew, and all policemen know, that half their work is done in virtue of the ignorance, the folly, and the timidity of those with whom they come in contact. An Englishman's house is so far his castle, that the veriest burglar, without a ticket-of-leave, could drive forth from his attic the smiling man in plain clothes before whose minatory forefinger he sits shaking in his highlows. The detective had no writ, of summons, that could compel Sir Frederick to enter an invisible witness-box, and yet he had succeeded in extracting from him two or three admissions of considerable import.

'Started, first of all, like a jibing horse, when I named Canada,' said Superintendent Starkey, telling off the points on his own large-knuckled fingers. 'Two roads go, I reckon, from that post. Was it because of Davis, *alias* Larpent, and his sister? Or was it on account of something he has been up to over there? Well, well, I must not draw it too fine. Anyhow, he knows a sight more of that brother and sister than he cares to tell. He gave her the money, a heap of it, as I learned; and why? Landlady couldn't say. I don't for a moment believe that he gave it for the sake of that shallow little creature with the odd-coloured eyes. She's no great shakes for looks; and the baronet has got two flames already, as I gather, one with property—one, from Canada too, without. Yet, he as good as owned to it that Mrs Gulp was correct as to what she saw through the keyhole. Not bad, to be screwed out of a tetchy, ill-conditioned chap like him, yonder.' And he jerked his thumb towards Jekyl Street, which was by this time left behind, as the active and intelligent officer passed on northwards.

Superintendent Starkey was bound for Great Eldon Street. He was not seldom in Great Eldon Street just then, and the brass-plate inscribed with the name of Gulp was as familiarly known to him as is the façade of St Peter's, at Rome, to a builder of churches. Maria Gulp, with her brevet rank as Mrs, the better days that she had seen, and the degradations which she daily underwent on account of the truant proclivities of her undisciplined maid-of-all-work, had become as so much plastic dough in the hands of the police—a lump of soft material that would take any impress. 'Give her liquor, and mix it with peppermint for the spasms, and listen, stirring her up with a leading question when she woolgathers, and you may get anything out of her,' had been the joint verdict of Sergeant Flint and of his colleague, Mr Starkey. And indeed Maria, under such influences, bleated out all that she knew or imagined concerning her lodgers. It is true that she said three words of the noble Downies and the past glories of Hardup for every one which she uttered concerning Bruce and his sister; but policemen are patient, and there was some gold in the dress. Mrs Gulp had

acquired, whilst at Hardup Hall, an amiable custom of making herself acquainted with the private affairs of her betters; and though there is a prejudice against information acquired by applying the ear and eye to keyholes, or by investigating the contents of unemptied pockets and unlocked dressing-cases, perhaps such irregular proceedings may be pardoned to the unpaid servants of that slippery peer, Lord Diddleham.

There was small encouragement to pry, in Great Eldon Street, into the concerns of people so insignificant as an attorney's clerk, and his sister, who taught music. But then there had suddenly dawned on that cramped horizon a vision of splendour. A live baronet, whom the landlady could remember as hunting with the Hardup hounds, and tossing off foaming bumpers of the dry champagne which the Earl of Diddleham economically preferred, for continual consumption, to the country ale for which it was harder to get credit, had come to visit Miss Davis, whose personal appearance and claims to the possession of beauty Mrs Gulp rated as only one woman can estimate those of another. 'There's no sweethearting in this case!' had been Mrs Gulp's comment, as she kept surreptitious watch on the interview. The experienced eaves-dropper was perhaps somewhat out of training, or spirituous consolations, too often resorted to, had joined with age to deaden the keenness of her organs, but so it was that she learned little.

The good sound grain to be sifted from Mrs Gulp's chaff came simply to this: She had seen, 'with her own eyes'—a detail on which she laid much stress—a number of crisp and rustling bank-notes change hands, passing from the possession of Sir Frederick into that of Miss Davis. If ever she saw hush-money paid and received, she saw it then. Sir Frederick had come no more, nor had he written. To this Maria could swear with a clear conscience, for, as she blushing admitted, curiosity had prompted her to take 'a peep' at her lodgers' very scanty correspondence. Perhaps Messrs Flint and Starkey, whose avocations often led them into the basements of the great, were aware of the wide latitude to be used in construing 'a peep' at some one else's letters, and knew nearly as much as did Lady Diddleham's former maid, as to bread-seals and the softening effects of steam, and the other treacherous traditions of servants whose scruples are few. But that both Violet Maybrook and Lady Livingston had written, the one to 'Miss Davis,' and the other to 'Miss Larpent, care of Miss Davis,' Mrs Gulp was certain. That the young teacher of music had gone repeatedly to Richmond to give lessons at the Fountains, was no secret. That the brother, never addressed by his sister otherwise than by the name of 'Bruce,' had abruptly departed, without good and sufficient cause—and that Maria would wager her existence that the elf was no more entitled to the name of Davis than to that of Montmorency or Bourbon, summed up what Mrs Gulp could impart.

But when the detectives began to deal with the elf herself, superintendent and sergeant were compelled to admit that they had met with their match in a young woman so self-possessed, cool, and fearless. They could not, with all their conversational arts, elicit from the little girl from Canada one statement that could be employed against her. Yes; she came from Canada. Yes; her name, which, for family reasons, had been

shelved in favour of that which had belonged to her mother, was Larpent. Both these facts, discovered by contemptible means, signified nothing, she boldly declared, to British justice. Of her history beyond seas, she would tell nothing, and this because she did not choose to gratify vulgar inquisitiveness. She was not her brother's keeper. Did she know his address, she was not bound to furnish it, but she did not know it. He had not explained to her his motives for suddenly leaving London. So far as she knew, he had been intrusted with some mission on behalf of Mr Good-eve. He had hinted as much. He was not so communicative with her as had once been the case. He was often absent from home, and might have associates of whom she knew, for good or evil, nothing. Her brother found himself dull and lonely in London, and his work was monotonous, and the confinement irksome.

For the rest, the girl held her ground boldly. Whatever she may have known or guessed as to Bruce Larpent, his hiding-place, or his actions, she was too firm to be scared or wheedled into revelations. She had done nothing, she said, nor, to her knowledge, had her brother, contrary to law. Leave the lodgings! Certainly not, until the expiration of her term. Besides, where should she go? She would stay, till Bruce came back again. In the meantime, Aphrodite warned sergeant and superintendent to be careful as to what they did. If they caused her annoyance, she should appeal to the police, or to a magistrate. Now, there is nothing which the police, acting unofficially, so much dislike as an official appeal to the police to put a stop to what is easily made to look like persecution, unless it be an application to one of those stipendiary cadis who exercise summary jurisdiction in the metropolis. Wherefore, the matter lay much in the hands of Mrs Gulp the landlady, who now made her daily report of all that she could discover concerning her lodger.

'The will! the garroting! the baronet's bank fimsies!—all hanks of the same hemp, I reckon,' said Superintendent Starkey as he plodded on.

ODDS AND ENDS:

FROM DR ROBERT CHAMBERS'S SCRAP-BOOK.

LADIES' LOGIC.—In the talk of some ladies who move in a tolerably good position, but who have been imperfectly educated, I have heard droll specimens of illogical reasoning. The following are two instances. A married lady with a family, who lived in a villa in the exterior environs of London, was asked why she was at the expense of keeping a cow, seeing that it would be surely much cheaper to buy milk for the household. 'Well,' said she in reply, 'we keep the cow because we have a field quite at hand, which answers very nicely.' 'But,' was the rejoinder, 'why do you rent the field?' The answer was: 'Because, you know, we have got the cow!'—The other instance occurred in my young days at Peebles. A lady in reduced circumstances mentioned to a friend that she had just arranged to rent a house belonging to a baker in the town. The friend was somewhat surprised at the announcement, considering the lady's circumstances, and asked if the expense would not be too much for her. 'Oh, not at all,' was the answer; 'we'll take bread for the rent!'

PINKERTON.—In the learned dispute about the Picts between Jonathan Oldbuck and Sir Arthur Wardour, it will be recollected that Oldbuck declared: 'I have the learned Pinkerton on my side.' Pinkerton, who died in 1826, was not only learned, but one of the most laborious and whimsical writers of his time. The man was in a sense mad, and his madness was of a curious kind. It was a maniacal hatred of everything Celtic. This he brought to a climax in his *Inquiry into the History of Scotland, preceding the Reign of Malcolm III.* a book issued in 1790. A writer in one of the London morning papers touched him off beautifully soon after his decease. 'Pinkerton maintained that every Celt, be he Scotch, Welsh, Irish, Breton, or Biscayan, is an unimprovable savage. "Shew me," said he, "any Celt that has contributed to the rolls of fame." And, it must be owned, that he had studied family genealogies so indefatigably, that it was no easy matter to knock him down without preparation. If you mentioned Burke—"What," said he, "a descendant of De Bourg? Class that high Norman chivalry with the riff-raff of Os and Macs? Shew me a great O, and I am done." He delighted to prove that the Scotch Highlanders had never had but a few great captains—such as Montrose, Dundee, the first Duke of Argyll—and these were all Goths;—the two first Lowlanders; the last a Norman, a *de Campo bello*! The aversion he had for the Celtic name extended itself to every person and every thing that had any connection with the Celtic countries. He used to shut his ears, and screw his absurd iron features into a most diabolical grin of disgust, whenever a bagpipe sounded; and I remember once meeting him at a country-house in Scotland, where the landlord was at the pains to have a bed hung with tartan curtains on purpose for his reception, well knowing that some explosion of the most particular frenzy would follow. Pinkerton did not observe anything that night, but he appeared in the morning with a face pale as marble with rage, his little gray eyes lighted up with the most fiery ferret-like wrath. He said nothing—not a word; but ordered a post-chaise immediately after breakfast, and, stepping into it, growled out a good-bye with coarse execrations of his tartan. With this outrageous humour, he was an extraordinary epicure. If a Goth was the first of human beings, a good cook was as certainly the second. Bitterly ferocious, he always softened at dinner. The soup melted him. As for his appearance, he was a very little and a very thin old man, with a very small, sharp, yellow face, thickly studded with small-pox marks, and decked with a pair of green spectacles. Gibbon had patronised him in his youth, and he returned the service by assuring the people of our generation that the historian of the *Decline and Fall* was really, in spite of his style, a man of considerable talent and discernment.' Considering his sublime hatred of Celts, it is amusing to know that Pinkerton died in Paris, the capital of a Celtic people. Perhaps a love of good cookery explains the incongruity.

A SORT WORD.—The art of saying an unpleasant thing in a perfectly agreeable manner, is a very high accomplishment, which should be studied by all persons liable to be asked for loans. Some years ago there was a banking-house in Edinburgh which gave general offence by the rude way that customers were sometimes addressed. A tradesman leaving a bill for discount, would on his

return have the bill thrown across the table, with the supercilious and loud remark: 'We don't know the parties.' Tradesman retires affronted, and ever afterwards speaks of the unmannerliness of the bank. There was at the same time another banking establishment in the town, the oldest in the country, which was noted for its civility. It was presided over by Mr F——, an aged gentleman, who knew the value of a soft word. When a tradesman, as in the former case, was to be refused the discounting of a bill, the old banker came forth from his den, and addressing the would-be customer in a friendly and confidential way, said: 'I am sorry it is not convenient to discount your bill to-day; but be so good as give my compliments to your wife!' Tradesman retires a little chafed, but not displeased, and ever after lauds the politeness of the bank.

ENGLISH RESERVE.—Lord Ashburton, in conversing with me at Sir James Clarke's, suggested a reason for the cold formal manners of English servants, which had struck him when he was himself a subaltern of office under Lord Ripon—being then a young man, I presume, and not come to his title. He said when he came into the room of one of his superiors, he observed great formality, that he might protect himself from being treated over-familiarly in his turn. He thinks the English servants have a similar view. It is a defensive measure. [In this last sentence, is in a great degree explained the principle of English reserve. To a certain extent, reserve may be imputed to shyness, but it is substantially a defence against over-familiarity and intrusiveness.]

CONFUSION OF IDEAS.—My brother W. once found a lady's brooch, which he next day advertised in the newspapers. Shortly after the announcement appeared, he was waited on by a lady who eagerly stated that she had lost a ring, and proceeded to describe it. 'But,' said my brother, 'it was not a ring that I found; it was a brooch.' 'Oh, yes,' replied the lady, 'but I thought you might have seen or heard something of my ring!' Phrenologists would call this a want of causality. It looks like a want of common-sense.

THE MONTH: SCIENCE AND ARTS.

DEAR coal, ships seaworthy and unseaworthy, frozen meat from the antipodes, the difference between voltaic and induced electricity, schemes for further arctic exploration, Sir Samuel Baker's exploits in Africa, Exhibitions in Science at the universities; the opening of the new buildings of the Owens College, Manchester; the education of working men and young children, sleeping-cars on railways—all these and other topics mingle with the special and general talk which the opening of the sessions of the learned and scientific societies never fails to inspire. The period of short days and long discussions has once more begun, and science, art, and literature are going to shew us something worth taking note of.

Some of our leading entomologists are bestirring themselves in favour of insects. It would be exceedingly inconvenient if every lady in the kingdom had three or four names; but for years

past every insect has had to fly about with a batch of names, by any one of which it was supposed to be known. Consequently, catalogues of insects have swollen in size, and identification has become difficult; and for all these reasons the naturalists above referred to are doing what they can to secure that insects shall have but one name. It will be a happy day for the *Cimex Babbii* when the Smiths, Browns, and Joneses which now confuse and obscure it, are swept away.

Naturalists have not yet told us where herrings come from; but they still come in incredible numbers. The Report of the Scottish herring-fishery for the present year shews that 715,047 'crans' of herrings were taken by the boats employed. Seventy dozen of the fish go to a cran; hence the total number may be ascertained by a little easy arithmetic. The money value of the whole capture is nearly a million and a half sterling; and what adds to the interest of the subject is, that this large sum is earned within the space of three months, and in a narrow strip of sea on the east coast of Scotland.

The noxious effects of mercury on the health of workmen in factories where this metal is used, have often been discussed with a view to a remedy. We now learn that ammonia neutralises its vapours, and that in a looking-glass manufactory in France where the workshops are sprinkled every evening with ammonia, the health of the workpeople does not suffer.

A French periodical states that the sale of artificial eyes in Paris amounts to four hundred a week. The principal place of sale is a handsome saloon, where the man-servant has but one eye, and customers wishing to buy, first judge of the effect of the artificial eye by placing it in the man's empty socket. The best made eyes command a high price; but we are informed that poor folk can be fitted with second-hand eyes on what is called 'reasonable terms.' The demand for artificial eyes is much greater than would commonly be supposed; and large numbers are exported to India, and even to the Sandwich Islands.

A party of American naturalists travelled in 1872 through Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah, to collect specimens for the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Cambridge, Massachusetts. Their Report makes known to us interesting discoveries and important conclusions. They found reason for believing that the bills of birds generally are larger on the Pacific slope of the continent than on the Atlantic slope—that on the great arid plains and in the deserts the plumage of birds is less vivid than in other regions. They mention a narrow belt of land stretching northwards from the mouth of the Columbia river, where the annual rainfall is nearly double that of any other district in the United States, and where the birds (and mammals also) not only reassume the brighter colours of the region east of the Great Plains, but in many cases present a depth of colour unequalled eastward in the same latitudes.

To those who have seen or read of the two groves of 'big trees' for which California is famous, it will be interesting that a third grove has recently been discovered in the forest region on the direct route to the Yosemite Valley. The timber generally in that part of the country is of large size; but these giants tower above all, and will no doubt attract tourists from afar. Destruction of forests

goes on so recklessly in America, that in some of the open districts premiums are given for the planting of trees. Abundant foliage is much wanted to improve the climate.

Young folk of the present generation may perhaps see the result of an attempt to repair the mischief occasioned in Italy by the reckless cutting down of forests in bygone years, for the Marquis Ginori has successfully commenced the rewooding of his estates on the slopes of the Apennines, in the neighbourhood of Florence. On a large breadth of mountain which the torrents had swept bare as a turnpike road, he planted oak, ilex, cypress, pine, and other hardy forest trees, and these, after a growth of ten years, form a pretty and promising thicket, which year by year will grow broader and higher, and eventually become a forest. By clever management, the torrents, led into lateral channels, are converted into a friendly source of irrigation, and add to the interest of the experiment. It is to be hoped that the marquis will find imitators among other landed proprietors in Italy: the plains as well as the mountains will benefit thereby, and the climate will become really as agreeable as an Italian climate is fondly but erroneously supposed to be.

A brief but interesting account of a discovery in Egypt is published in the *Proceedings* of the Society of Antiquaries. An Englishman travelling on the skirts of Sinai noticed small blue stones lying in the beds of dried-up torrents, and brought a few to England, where he learned that they were turquoises of good quality. He went back to Egypt, made further researches, built a house at the junction of three valleys, and, aided by friendly natives, whom he took into his service, he discovered the turquoise mines formerly worked by the ancient Egyptians, together with some of their tools, and the places where they ground and polished the stones. So now turquoises are dug from those old rocks and sent to England. Ancient ironworks have also been discovered with huge heaps of slag piled around them. A specimen of this slag on being tested was found to contain 53 per cent. of iron, which favours the supposition that it would pay to smelt the whole mass over again. To protect these valuable deposits, the Pharaohs built fortifications, and a barrack and temple for the troops, relics of which still remain.

In a communication made to the Manchester Philosophical Society, it is stated that a large part of the iron ore of Lancashire was transported by ice from the place of its origin, was then re-deposited as drift, and covered by clay and fragments of rock. As the ice melted, the water carried the ore down into crevices and caverns of the limestone beneath, where it is now found quite soft, or what miners call 'puddling ore.' The quantity of iron ore of various kinds in the United Kingdom is so great that, as one of the witnesses said in his evidence before the parliamentary Coal Committee, it will outlast the coal. Even in Cornwall, so renowned for copper and tin, a lode of solid iron ore has been recently discovered, forty feet in breadth and thickness in places, and extending with an average breadth of twenty feet to a length of four miles. And it is now known that miles of smaller lodes exist in the same county.

In India, also, recent surveys have disclosed hundreds of square miles of iron ore—much of it

excellent in quality—and endeavours are to be made to turn it to account, by the erection of smelting-works.

Antiquaries and ethnologists have for years been talking about an 'iron age'; but some of our geologists and mineralogists are now agreed that there never was an iron age, in the sense generally understood, but shew that iron is mentioned in the very oldest literature in the world, and that there never was a period when iron was unknown.

A new motor-engine, in which oil is the source of power, has been patented in America. A shower of oil in the form of spray is discharged into the cylinder behind the piston, and, being mixed with air, is ignited at the proper moment by an electric attachment. The consequent expansion drives the piston forward, and the movement of the fly-wheel drives it back, and thus the motion may be kept up for any length of time.

There are now twelve places in Australia where diamonds are found—two being in South Australia, and five each in New South Wales and Victoria. In the Vaal River Territory in South Africa, the diamond district comprises nearly four hundred square miles. In the province of Bahia, Brazil, is a region as yet but imperfectly known, which produces diamonds by thousands, the annual value being estimated at three million dollars. This region is a Tertiary sandstone, a very remarkable fact, and some mineralogists are of opinion that there will be discovered the history of the formation of the diamond. The use of the diamond as a boring-tool is thought to be a modern invention; but there is a tradition in South Africa that the Bushmen of past generations were in the habit of seeking for diamonds along the Vaal, and using them to bore holes in hard stones, which were their tools, implements, and ornaments. To these mineralogical particulars we add a few words spoken by the President of the Royal Society of New South Wales in his last anniversary address: 'We have now evidence that Eastern Australia is what I have often stated, one vast field of mineral wealth. From north to south, and from the coast to the 141st meridian, the western boundary of New South Wales, we know that coal, gold, copper, tin, and in many places lead, and other minerals of less local importance, are found in abundance.'

The telegraph is making good progress in Brazil, and ere long a line will stretch along the coast from one end of that great empire to the other. From Rio de Janeiro an extension will be carried to Monte Video and Buenos Ayres, where a connection with the line that crosses the Andes to Valparaiso can be made. Thus England and Europe will soon be able to send telegrams direct to the far-away port on the Pacific, for in a short time a cable will be laid from Lisbon to Madeira, and thence to St Vincent and Pernambuco. The laying of deep-sea cables seems now to have become a matter of course; and the ease with which a broken cable can be hooked up and repaired from great depths is one of the most noteworthy triumphs of modern mechanical enterprise.

In Philadelphia has been introduced a system of 'domestic telegraphy,' which, as its name imports, is intended for familiar household use, playing the part of a swift-footed messenger in emergencies, and aiding in the cause of order. The city is parcelled into districts, each with a central office, whence wires are stretched to any house and in

any direction, terminating in a small iron box containing the working apparatus. A ring projects from the box. If this ring is pulled once, a nimble errand-boy speeds from the central office, ready to obey orders; if pulled three times, a policeman makes his appearance, also ready to obey orders; and if the ring be pulled more than three times, it announces that a fire has broken out; and before the fire-engine can arrive, a man rushes in from the same prompt depot with a fire-annihilator strapped to his back. People who wish to take a holiday, may connect all their doors and windows with the central office, then shut up their house, and depart, confident that the slightest attempt at burglary will be at once detected. In this way, as the mayor of Philadelphia remarked, 'electricity is to be reduced from its proud position as a messenger between continents to the humble uses of domestic life.'

How did the fire break out? is a question too often asked, unfortunately, and too seldom answered. In most instances the answer would be, want of thought. If people did think on the subject, they would not let dangerous rubbish-heaps lie about as they do now. Major Majendie, Inspector of Gunpowder Manufactories, has made known at Woolwich the result of certain experiments which, while of high importance to all engaged in the manufacture or storage of gunpowder, is worth consideration everywhere. In all places where machinery is in work, cotton-waste is used for cleaning and oiling; and this oily waste is suffered to lie about on window-sills and in holes and corners, though liable to set itself on fire with an elevation of temperature to one hundred and thirty or to one hundred and fifty degrees. Thus it may easily happen that sunshine or the heat of a steam-pipe will excite a neglected heap of waste to the burning-point; and in this way we have the answer to the question with which this paragraph begins. The conclusion is obvious: Waste heaps should never be allowed to accumulate.

OUR LOST PET.

SHE went what time the birds of passage sought

The sunny south, our first and only love;

A short and pleasant loan, who only brought

Joy to our hearts awhile, then soared above.

A star dropped where nought star-like long may be—

Fair as a day-old flow'et washed in dew,

With eyes so clear, we fancied we could see

Her soul—the Angel in her—shining through.

Departed hath she, like the first light snow,

Quick melted in the early winter sun;

And all of her we evermore may know

Is, that a marvellous sight hath come and gone.

For now, left lonely as we are again,

Our only darling, gone beyond recall,

Is unto us a vision in the brain,

A dream within the heart, and that is all.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.
Also sold by all Booksellers.